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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/777,631	02/06/2001	Douglas W. Kohrs	6683.26USC1	4464

7590

01/15/2004

James R. Chiapetta
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, MN 55402-0903

EXAMINER

SNOW, BRUCE EDWARD

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3738

DATE MAILED: 01/15/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application N .

09/777,631

Applicant(s)

KOHRS, DOUGLAS W.

Examiner

Bruce E Snow

Art Unit

3738

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 December 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 36-47, 49, 50 and 53-72 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 36-47, 49-50, 53-72 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Terminal Disclaimer

The Terminal Disclaimer filed 12/19/03 is improper. An attorney or agent, not of record, is not authorized to sign a terminal disclaimer in the capacity as an attorney or agent acting in a representative capacity as provided by 37 CFR 1.34 (a). See 37 CFR 1.321(b) and/or (c).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 36-47, 49-50, 53-60 would be allowed upon the submission of a proper terminal disclaimer. Applicant indicated a terminal disclaimer would be submitted upon the indication of allowable subject matter.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

All claims are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over all claims of U.S. Patent No. 6224631.

Art Unit: 3738

Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other claiming the same implant comprising the same elements.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 63-72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 63 is ambiguous. "First support end" and "second support ends" appear to be describing the top and bottom of the central support member and not the ends. What is a "traverse member"?

Claim 68 is ambiguous. What is a traverse member?

Claim 72 is ambiguous. What is a traverse member?

Specification

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: New claims 63-72 use claim language such as "traverse member" which is not supported in the specification. It is applicant's duty to assure that all claim language is supported in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article 21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 63-72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Kohrs (5,609,636).

Referring to all figures, specifically figures 17-19, Kohrs teaches an implant comprising first and second bearing surfaces connected by a plurality of columns 405, 406, 407, 411, 412, 413 arranged in two rows "along" a midline of said bearing surfaces. See definition of "along" below. A row of columns can also be defined as a "central support" located central of the bearing surfaces in a vertical direction. Said bearing surfaces having an opposing inner surfaces at least between the two rows of columns; channels are formed on either side of the central support member.

Art Unit: 3738

a·long

a·long (e-lông¹, e-lòng¹) *preposition*

1. Over the length of: *walked along the path.*
2. On a line or course parallel and close to; continuously beside: *rowed along the shore; the trees along the avenue.*
3. In accordance with: *The committee split along party lines over the issue.*¹

Claims 61-72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Knothe (WO 97/15247).

Knothe teaches an implant comprising first and second bearing surfaces 3, 4 connected by a central support; wherein opposing inner surfaces of the first and second load bearing surface form channels on either side of the central support.

Claims 61-72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being **clearly anticipated** by Hochshuler et al (6,045,579). See all figures, specifically figures 6A and 6B wherein element 30 is the entire implant. The reference can also be interpreted wherein element 30 is the central support member between the traverse members.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments regarding the Knothe rejection filed 12/19/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant states that Knothe does not disclose a central support member configured to support loads and is configured to flex.

¹ *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation; further reproduction and distribution restricted in accordance with the Copyright Law of the United States. All rights reserved.

Art Unit: 3738

This argument is not commensurate with the scope of the claims. When the device is implanted in its final configuration as shown in figure 2, the device is designed such that the central support member supports loads placed upon the bearing surfaces.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bruce E Snow whose telephone number is (703) 308-3255. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott can be reached on (703)308-2111. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0858.

bes
January 13, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BS' followed by a long horizontal line.

BRUCE SNOW
PRIMARY EXAMINER